



Building Self Esteem in Children

Lionel Hartley, PhD



Full word-for-word transcript

PowerPoint Slides

Activity Sheet (Activities 1-3)

Workbook - Keys to a Healthy Self Esteem

Workbook - I, Myself and Me

Children Learn What They Live (Poster/handout)

Children's Workshop or Homework Activity Sheets

Other Seminar Handouts

Body Image Tips for Parents

Sample poster

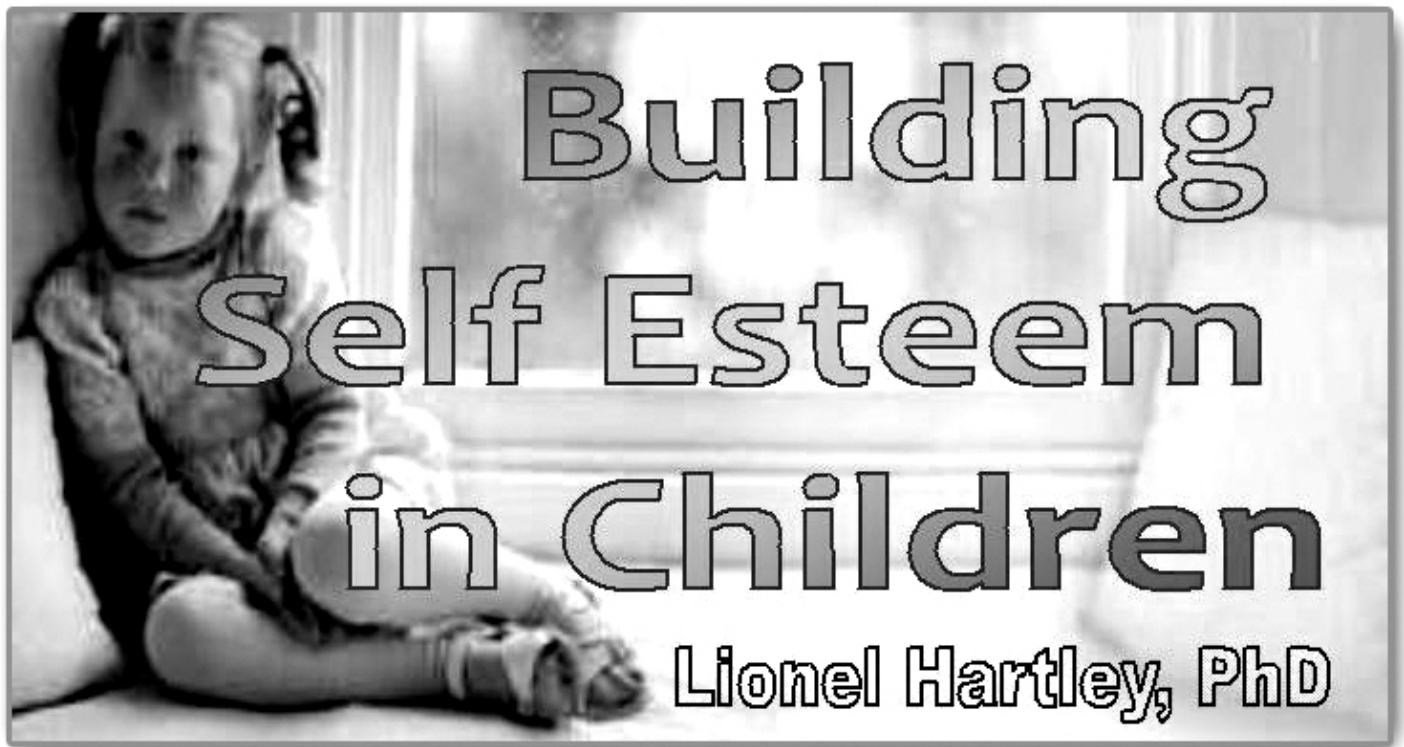


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Question & Answer Session



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Slide 1 – Title Slide

Slide 2 – The Ugly Duckling

“The Ugly Duckling” is a literary fairy tale by Danish poet and author Hans Christian Andersen (1805–1875). The story tells of a little bird born in a barnyard who suffers abuse from the others around him until, much to his delight (and to the surprise of others), he matures into a beautiful swan, the most beautiful bird of all.

In reviewing the book “Hans Christian Andersen: A New Life” by biographer Jens Andersen, British journalist Anne Chisholm writes “Andersen himself was a tall, ugly boy with a big nose and big feet, and when he grew up with a beautiful singing voice and a passion for the theatre he was cruelly teased and mocked by other children”. His treasured story proves he was no chicken.

It’s a simple story that begins when a swan’s egg is inadvertently left in a duck’s nest. The swan spends its formative years surrounded by ducks and starts to behave and act like a duck.

All this “ugly duckling” had as role models were other ducks and so he tried his best to conform accordingly. But the other ducks see him as a big long-necked failure.

And so the story goes on and on about how sad this ugly duckling’s life is, and how he would never go on to fulfil his potential as a beautiful swan. But as luck would have it, he one day spies other swans flying overhead and his vision of life’s possibilities is dramatically transformed.

He observes his new role models (the swans) and talks to them, soon realising he has the ability to fly. And the story ends with the ugly duckling transforming into a beautiful swan in his new environment with the other swans.

As a parent or educator, you, more than anyone else, can play an important role in promoting your children’s self-esteem and helping them feel better about themselves, helping them to see and blossom the swan within.

Slide 3 - Icebreaker

Please share your name, the ages of your children and what you hope to learn from today's seminar.

Slide 4 – Seminar Author

One of the goals of education and parenting is to help children lead productive lives. Helping children feel good about themselves is a reasonable educational objective. Educators hope that school experiences will help children develop a sense of personal competency and self-esteem, while caregivers and parents hope that children will express positive feelings and ideas about themselves as they move through childhood into adulthood. While it is normal to have ups and downs in life, and children's sense of self-esteem can vary from one situation to the next, constant poor or low self-esteem can be a symptom of a mental health disorder or emotional disturbance requiring the support of a health professional.

How does a child acquire a healthy sense of self? How can parents, caregivers, and teachers help youngsters develop self-esteem? These are some of the questions we will address in today's program.

Slide 4 - What is self-esteem?

Self-esteem is a term used in psychology to reflect a person's overall evaluation of his or her own worth. If you have good self-esteem, it means that you like yourself and believe that you are as good as everyone else. If you have poor self-esteem, it means that you believe that you are inferior to others.

Self-esteem encompasses the beliefs and feelings that children have about their competence and worth, including their ability to make a difference in their environment, confront challenges and learn from both their success and failure.

Some define self-esteem as what we think and feel about ourselves. It is our self-evaluation and our sense of self-worth. Sometimes the terms self-esteem and self-concept are used interchangeably. Some researchers have written that self-concept includes the qualities, capabilities, and ways of thinking that define a person. Self-esteem is sometimes defined as a part of self-concept that comprises self-evaluations.

For example, a child may say, "I am a good reader" or "I am a slow runner."

Self-esteem may be used to predict how a person will act in the future. For example, when a child agrees with statements such as, “I feel uncomfortable when I am with people I don’t know,” he or she may be sharing a history of feeling uneasy in new social situations. In new social situations, it is likely that the child may feel awkward and so may tend to avoid people and environments that are unfamiliar. On the other hand, when a child agrees with a statement such as, “I am a good friend,” he or she may be reflecting a history of positive peer relationships and a high probability of success in new social situations.

Slide 6 - Modelling Self Esteem Activity 1

Take your workshop activity handout and look at Activity 1. Children learn a lot about self-esteem by watching their parents. So in this activity I want you to write down your own “three accomplishments that mean the most to you”. Be prepared to share at least one of these with the group.

Slide 7 - Signs of a Healthy Self-Esteem

Children with good self-esteem have a sense of security, assume responsibility, act independently, take personal pride in accomplishments, tolerate frustration, accept mistakes and failure, have a sense of self-discipline and self-control, handle peer pressure appropriately, attempt new tasks and challenges, handle positive and negative feelings, and offer assistance to others.

Sometimes it’s easy to notice when children seem to feel good about themselves — and when they don’t. We often describe this idea of feeling good about ourselves as “self-esteem.”

Children with self-esteem:

- feel liked and accepted
- feel confident
- feel proud of what they can do
- think good things about themselves
- believe in themselves

Slide 8 - Signs of a Healthy Self-Esteem (2)

Children with low self-esteem:

- are self-critical and hard on themselves
- feel they're not as good as other children
- think of the times they fail rather than when they succeed
- lack confidence
- doubt they can do things well

Slide 9 - Why Self-Esteem Matters

Children who feel good about themselves have the confidence to try new things. They are more likely to try their best. They feel proud of what they can do. Self-esteem helps children cope with mistakes. It helps children try again, even if they fail at first. As a result, self-esteem helps children do better at school, at home, and with friends.

Children with low self-esteem feel unsure of themselves. If they think others won't accept them, they may not join in. They may let others treat them poorly. They may have a hard time standing up for themselves. They may give up easily, or not try at all. Children with low self-esteem find it hard to cope when they make a mistake, lose, or fail. As a result, they may not do as well as they could.

Slide 10 - How Self-Esteem Develops

Self-esteem can start as early as babyhood. It develops slowly over time. It can start just because a child feels safe, loved, and accepted. It can start when a baby gets positive attention and loving care.

As babies become toddlers and young children, they're able to do some things all by themselves. They feel good about themselves when they can use their new skills. Their self-esteem grows when parents pay attention, let a child try, give smiles, and show they're proud.

As children grow, self-esteem can grow too. Any time children try things, do things, and learn things can be a chance for self-esteem to grow.

Slide overlay

This can happen when children:

- make progress toward a goal
- learn things at school
- make friends and get along
- learn skills — music, sports, art, cooking, technical skills
- practice favourite activities

- help, give, or be kind

Slide 11- How Self-Esteem Develops (2)

- get praise for good behaviours
- try hard at something
- do things they're good at and enjoy
- are included by others
- feel understood and accepted
- get a prize or a good grade they know they've earned

When children have self-esteem, they feel confident, capable, and accepted for who they are.

Slide 12 - Global Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is a multidimensional construct. Overall feelings of self-worth are often called global self-esteem. Global self-esteem includes all the dimensions of an individual's talents, capabilities, accomplishments, and personality. This may include academic self-esteem, social self-esteem, physical self-esteem, and several other areas that are still being studied such as aesthetic self-esteem. As children grow and experience the world, the parts of self-esteem become more distinct. Children's self-esteem may vary among different domains. For example, a child may have high academic self-esteem but lower physical self-esteem; a child might regard himself or herself as a talented musician but poor in math or spelling.

Children with low self-esteem are usually described as being hesitant to take risks or move out of their comfort zone. They often talk and think negatively about themselves. In contrast, children with very high self-esteem may be described as cocky, boastful, or arrogant. Persons with extremely high self-esteem are often perceived as threatening and aggressive. Having healthy self-esteem is a balance between being too guarded and too egotistical; it is also a balance between thinking too negatively or too positively about oneself.

Slide 13 – Life Factors

Self-esteem is related to a number of life factors. Healthy self-esteem is related to experiencing school success, feeling happy and satisfied, making healthy lifestyle choices, having rewarding relationships, and demonstrating

effective coping skills. Low self-esteem is related to several physical and mental health disorders such as eating disorders, depression, and anxiety. In addition, low self-esteem may result from interpersonal problems, loneliness, gang membership, obesity, suicidal tendencies, and teen pregnancy.

Slide 14 - Modelling Self Esteem Activity 2

Take your workshop activity handout and look at Activity 2.

In the box, I want you to draw a picture (or pictures) of some things that you like about yourself, or of something that you have created or have made of which you are proud. Be prepared to share this with the group.

Slide 15 - Development of Healthy Self-Esteem

Temperament

How a child develops self-esteem is complex and somewhat elusive.

Research suggests that self-esteem may be related to a child's temperament, which is probably inherited or otherwise biologically determined. Generally, children tend to have one or a combination of three temperaments: easy (tend to be cheerful and adaptive), difficult (tend to be slow to adapt and have intense or negative reactions), and slow to warm up (tend to be less active and appear low key). Children with slow-to-warm-up temperaments may be hesitant or cautious. They do not necessarily have a low self-esteem but may need more time to adapt to expectations and environments.

Culture

Research also suggests that much of the influence over an individual's self-esteem comes from early positive experiences with parents or other significant individuals. In the long run, ethnicity or race, social class, and gender seem to have little effect on global self-esteem. However, cultural values may influence how self-esteem is perceived. For example, western cultures tend to value individualism, extroversion, and physical appearance and equate these qualities with healthy self-esteem.

Children from eastern cultures are encouraged to be modest and tend to hold back positive evaluations of themselves.

Although distinct successes and failures, rejections and acceptances, and appearance have a moderate effect on self-esteem, self-esteem is relatively stable.

Losing a soccer game or failing a test probably will not be devastating to a child's self-esteem, but an ongoing pattern of failure in many areas over an extended period without helpful adult support may affect a child's sense of self.

Acceptance & Mentoring

Children are affected by how much they feel accepted, liked, and loved, especially by parents and significant others. However, children also need relationships with adults who have high and reasonable expectations for their behaviour, who help them meet those expectations, and who let them learn from their mistakes. Regardless of a child's early experiences or home environment, both teachers and parents can help children develop a healthy self-esteem.

Slide 16 - How Adults Help Children Develop Healthy Self-Esteem

Take out your workbook: 28 Keys to a Healthy Self-Esteem.

This is to save you having to copy them from a PowerPoint. Space has been allowed after each key for your own notes.

Love your child unconditionally.

This seems obvious, but it's probably the most important thing you can give your child. Even if you do it imperfectly—and who doesn't?—always dole out plenty of love. Your child needs to feel accepted and loved, beginning with the family and extending to other groups such as friends, schoolmates, sports teams, and community. If you yell or ignore or make some other parenting mistake, give your child a hug and tell her you're sorry and you love her. Unconditional love builds a strong foundation for confidence. Let your child know through word and gesture that she is loved no matter what.

Distinguish being from behaving

When you disapprove of your child's behaviour, let her know that it is the behaviour you don't like, not her. An excellent example of this is found in the earliest-written book in the Holy Bible, the story of Job. If you know the story of Job, he came upon many calamities and his wife suggested that he just "curse God and die" In Job 2:10 we see that Job doesn't call her a fool, but refers to her behaviour by saying, "You are talking like a foolish woman" (NIV) or "You speak as any foolish woman would speak (NRSV).

Value children.

Adults who express unconditional positive regard and acceptance for children create an atmosphere that promotes optimistic attitudes and a willingness to take risks. Parents who express unconditional love and acceptance for their children tend to have children who develop a secure sense of who they are. Children need to know that even when they make mistakes and experience failure they are valued by others and are loved, especially by significant adults in their lives. They also need to know that they are valued because of their relationships with adults, not for their perfect math paper, wonderful artwork, their place on the honour roll, or the lead role in the school play. One of the best ways for parents to send the message that they value their children is to spend time together in an activity of the child's choice. When children know that parents value them enough to spend time with them, they can feel they have inherent worth.

Listen to children.

Adults should listen carefully to the children's experiences and opinions. When a child has hurt feelings or is frightened, adults can acknowledge the feeling by saying, "I can see that you are sad. I'd like to hear about what happened." Adults must listen carefully to the child without interrupting and should not tell the child how to feel. They must avoid responses such as, "Oh, that's silly to feel sad about not being invited to your friend's birthday party. You'll get over it; it's not a big deal." Listening thoughtfully and respectfully helps children to learn to trust themselves and their feelings.

Set appropriate boundaries and expectations.

Parents and teachers who set firm and consistent boundaries for children's behaviour tend to create environments that are reasonable and predictable, where children feel safe to explore and take risks. When children know specifically what is expected of them, they are more likely to meet those expectations, creating a sense of security. When adults have high and reasonable standards for behaviour, and they discipline with warmth and caring, most children will respond with appropriate behaviours that meet the adult's expectations and help the children develop a sense of competency. When rules are broken, the consequences should not be harsh or cruel, but should be administered in a way that maintains the child's self-respect. Being firm, consistent, and emotionally warm and responsive are hallmarks of good classroom management and good parenting.

Set household rules and be consistent.

Children are more confident when they know who is in charge and what to expect. Even if your child thinks your rules are too strict, she will have confidence in what she can and can't do when you set rules and enforce them consistently. Every household will have different rules, and they will change over time based on your child's age. Whatever your household rules, be clear on what is important in your family. Learning and following rules gives children a sense of security and confidence. As children get older they may have more input on rules and responsibilities. But, it's important to remember that you are the parent—not a best friend. Someday when your child is feeling peer pressure, he or she may appreciate having the foundation and confidence to say, “No, I can't do that.”

Let your child take healthy risks

Start by forcing yourself to stand back while your child takes healthy risks, says Victoria Sopik, CEO of Kids & Company, a corporate childcare service in Toronto, Canada, and a mother of eight. “To build confidence in the world, children have to take chances, make choices and take responsibility for them,” Sopik says. She sees too many parents trying to rescue their children from failure all the time.

Sopik remembers staring from across the room as her two-year-old son, Fraser, lifted a huge jug of orange pop at a fancy party. “He was about to pour it into a glass, and I just stood there, holding my breath,” Sopik recalls. Rather than trying to save her son before he had a chance to try, Sopik watched as Fraser spilled the pop all over the floor.

Then came the best part: Fraser found a waitress, asked for a paper towel and cleaned up his own mess. “He solved his own problem—just like we do as successful adults,” Sopik says.

Help your child set realistic goals.

When your child is starting out in soccer, it's fine for her to think she'll eventually be on the Olympic team. But if she fails to make the varsity team in high school and still thinks she's an Olympic-calibre player, then she needs to focus on more realistic goals. Guide your child to set reasonable goals to help avoid feelings of failure. If the goal is a stretch, discuss some reachable short-term steps along the path.

Teach children to develop decision making skills.

Recognize them when they have made good decisions.

Teach problem-solving skills.

Rescuing children from their mistakes or failures tends to teach them that they are not capable of solving their problems and that they need adults to rescue them. Children who are not held accountable for their mistakes do not learn how to solve problems and may learn to blame others for their mistakes. If a child gets in trouble at school, adults can help the child acknowledge the mistake and brainstorm ways to solve the problem. Then they should let the child take the lead in correcting the problem, providing support if needed. Adults can listen to a child's feelings about the situation, but they should avoid shaming the child or faulting others. Focusing on solving the problem rather than blaming creates feelings of competency. From this, a child learns that we all make mistakes and can learn from experiencing failure, that most problems can be fixed, and that other people will still care about us.

Be a positive role model.

Take care of your own self-esteem, and your children will have a great role model. Parents who report positive self-esteem tend to have children with positive self-esteem.

Slide 17 - Modelling Self Esteem Activity 3

Take your workshop activity handout and look at Activity 3.

Write down the names of at least three people who have been good role models in your life. Be prepared to share these with the group.

Slide 18 (List continues)

Create a safe, loving home environment.

Children who do not feel safe or are abused at home will suffer immensely from low self-esteem.

Give your child some independence and control.

Let your child learn new things and participate in the world around her. Let your child make her own age appropriate choices. You can keep your child safe while allowing her to spread her wings.

Model self-love and positive self-talk.

You must love yourself before you can teach your child to love him or herself. You can model this behaviour by rewarding and praising yourself when you do well. Whether you run a marathon, get a promotion at work or

throw a successful dinner party, celebrate your successes with your children. Talk about the skills and talents and efforts needed for you to achieve those accomplishments. In the same conversation, you can remind your child of the skills he or she possesses and how they can be developed and used.

Don't compare your child with others.
Children develop at their own pace. Your child needs to know that she is doing just fine.

Show children that you can laugh at yourself.
Show them that life doesn't need to be serious all the time. Laughing, good humour and smiling not only lighten the mood but also relieve stress, increase energy and take away thoughts of anger, anxiety or distress.

Praise effort.
Praise children in ways that acknowledge their efforts and focus on the process as well as the outcome. For example, when a child shows improvement in math a teacher can say, "I can tell you worked very hard on this math assignment. I appreciate how much you tried." Children can consistently produce effort, although the outcome of their efforts is not always guaranteed. If an adult says something such as, "I knew you were the smartest student in math!" yet the child knows there are times when he or she is not the smartest student in math, the student may discount the praise and develop a sense of distrust when others express their approval. Empty praise and flattery that are not grounded in reality and are not evidenced in the child's experience tend to do more harm than good by discounting the expectations and standards for responsible, productive behaviour. Frequent unearned praise may also lead children to rely on external praise rather than on their own evaluations of their accomplishments.

Help them feel special and appreciated.
Effective praise is specific and describes what the child did well. Instead of "Good job," teachers can say, "I like the way you completed this project. It was turned in before the due date, and your drawings help me understand your ideas. What do you like about how this project turned out?" In a similar manner, parents or caregivers can say, "I like the way you cleaned your room. The way you made your bed is especially neat, and your clothes are folded nicely in your closet. You did a fine job. What do you like about the way it looks?"

Encourage internal satisfaction.

Children need to learn to experience internal satisfaction for their efforts and accomplishments rather than expecting external approval and rewards for everything they do.

Avoid shaming words.

Criticizing, blaming, and ridiculing children are damaging to self-esteem. Choose your words carefully and remember their power. You can disapprove of a behaviour, but let your child know that you approve of him.

Instil independence and adventure.

Self-confident children are willing to try new things without fear of failure. With younger children, you will need to supervise from the sidelines. Set up situations where she can do things for herself and make sure the situation is safe—but then give her space. For example, demonstrate how to make a sandwich and then let her try it on her own, without your hovering or intervening. Encourage exploration, whether it's a trip to a new park or new foods at mealtime. Day trips and outings, new hobbies, vacations and trips with team-mates or schoolmates can all expand your child's horizons and build confidence in her ability to handle new situations.

Encourage sports or other physical activities.

No longer the sole domain of boys, sports help girls and boys build confidence. They learn that they can practice, improve and achieve goals. Other benefits: they learn to recognize their strengths, accept or strengthen their weaknesses, handle defeat, expand their circle of friends and learn teamwork. Another confidence-boosting bonus: they stay fit and learn to respect their bodies. Try to find a physical activity that he or she enjoys, whether it's running, dance, martial arts, bicycling, swimming or hiking.

Give constructive criticism

And avoid criticism that takes the form of ridicule or shame. Provide feedback about the child's actions, not the child as a person.

Teach resilience.

No one succeeds at everything all the time. There will be setbacks and failures, criticism and pain. Use these hurdles as learning experiences rather than dwelling on the events as failures or disappointments. The old adage, "Try, try, try again," has merit, especially in teaching children not to give up. But, it's also important to validate your child's feelings rather than

saying, “Oh, just cheer up,” or, “You shouldn’t feel so bad.” This helps children learn to trust their feelings and feel comfortable sharing them. Children will learn that setbacks are a normal part of life and can be managed. If your child does poorly on a test, don’t smother him with pity or tell him that he’ll never be a good reader. Instead, talk about what steps he can take to do better next time. When he does succeed, he will take pride in his accomplishment.

Identify and redirect your children’s inaccurate beliefs.

Teach them how to think in positive ways, and change their negative thoughts about themselves to positive ones.

Many beliefs that an individual holds about themselves, reflect messages they have received from those most close to them over time. If these relationships are strong and there is generally positive feedback, it is more likely that he or she will see themselves as worthwhile and have a stronger self-esteem. So, it is important to remember that if an individual receives mostly negative feedback i.e. often criticised, teased or ‘put down’, they are more likely to encounter difficulties with their self-esteem. When criticism is necessary it can be done in a constructive way, by addressing the behaviour, rather than criticising the person. Instead of over-emphasising negative words like - ‘no, stop and don’t’, remember the key is to tell the child what you want him or her to do. This is especially important if the child has ADHD as well as low self-esteem, as they may really need to know what the appropriate or expected behaviour is. Therefore, parents and teachers can often help the child best by redirecting inappropriate behaviour and instructing as to what they should be doing instead. Encouraging a child to have a sense of belonging, loyalty and responsibility to a larger group will help them contribute and feel connected, which will help prevent any feelings of isolation and worthlessness. This can be applied to both school and activities outside of school. Positive self-esteem can also help the individual make healthy choices about his or her body e.g. diet and exercise, and his or her mind; If you think you are important, you will be less likely to follow the crowd if your friends are doing something wrong or dangerous. If you have positive self-esteem, you know you are bright enough to make your own decisions. Consequently you value your safety, your feelings, your health - your complete self. The individual’s thoughts perhaps have the biggest impact on their self-esteem and these thoughts are within their control, perhaps with some help at times from outside the family or school.

Provide opportunities for success.

Experiencing success is important. When children only experience failure they may begin to doubt themselves. If a child's academic skills are below classroom expectations and the child has a sense of continuing failure, teachers can respond by creating assignments and projects at the child's current skill level or adjusting assignments so that the child experiences success. One of the most effective ways for children to see their success is through charting their improvement. For example, if a child is struggling with learning multiplication facts, the teacher can chart the child's progress in successfully completing multiplication tests or worksheets. Seeing tangible evidence of progress helps children feel proud of their improving skills.

Likewise, parents can help children choose activities that are developmentally appropriate and that provide opportunities for children to feel successful. Learning a musical instrument or playing on a sports team can help children receive recognition for constructive behaviours. It is important for parents to choose activities that are developmentally appropriate and reflect the child's personal strengths.

Support their pursuit of a passion.

Everyone excels at something, and it's great when your child discovers that something. As a parent, respect and encourage your child's interests—even if they don't interest you. Praise your child when they accomplish something in their budding pursuits. If your son's talent is playing guitar in a band, support his interest, as long as it doesn't interfere with responsibilities like schoolwork. This doesn't mean you give free reign for your teenager to stay out all night or smoke pot in your garage, which brings us to the next tip.

Provide opportunities for service

Children often feel successful when they provide service in their homes, schools, and communities. Learning to help others gives children a sense that they have something important to give and also provides a sense of belonging. An older child who is having difficulty reading may experience success by tutoring a younger child, which, in turn, increases the tutor's reading skills.

Coach relationship skills.

Confidence in relationships is key to your child's self-confidence. The most important initial relationship is the loving parent-child relationship. But as your child's social circle expands, you will help her see how her actions affect others—and help her learn to maintain an inner core of confidence

when someone else's actions affect her. As a parent, it's not your role to "fix" every situation, but rather to teach your child the compassion, kindness, self-assertiveness and, yes, confidence to handle the ups and downs of relationships.

Spend one-on-one time with your child.

Whether it's grabbing a bite to eat or taking a bike ride, try to schedule some 'alone time' with your child at least once a week. This is a great opportunity to talk about what's on her mind and to cement the bond the two of you share.

Conclusion

Helping children develop self-esteem is a matter of helping them gather evidence that they are competent and capable. This evidence needs to be genuine and based on experience. When adults create opportunities for children to take risks and experience success, they are helping them develop a sense of self-worth. When children make mistakes, they need supportive adults who do not rescue them from the consequences but teach them to solve problems and express confidence that they will do better next time. Overall, children need to know that they are cared for and valued.

Slide 19 - Self Esteem Across the Ages:

Babies and self-esteem

Newborns and very young babies don't see themselves as being their own person. This means they don't really have self-esteem.

You can still lay the groundwork for healthy self-esteem by:

- caring for your baby gently
- responding when your baby cries
- giving lots of cuddles and smiles.

All of this tells your baby that she is loved and lovable.

Self-esteem is about liking yourself and who you are. For children, it comes from knowing that you're loved and that you belong to a family that values you.

Slide 20 - Self Esteem Across the Ages (2)

Toddlers and self-esteem

Toddlers are beginning to develop an understanding of themselves, what they can do and what makes them who they are.

Your toddler wants to make more decisions – and it's a good idea to let him have a go at deciding between safe, toddler-friendly options, like which toy to play with or which hat to wear. As they learn, toddlers realise that they have the power to make things happen, which adds to their developing self-esteem.

But children at this age still see themselves through your eyes, so you have a very important role to play in building your toddler's self-esteem. Here are some ideas:

- Let your child explore her environment but be present and ready to respond to her if she needs you. For example, your child might like stacking blocks but get a fright when they fall down. She needs you to let her know it's OK.
- Let your toddler make reasonable decisions – for example, whether to have jam or vegemite on toast. This gives toddlers an exciting sense of control, which helps to develop confidence and a sense of self.
- Give your child the chance to say 'no'. Toddlers need to assert themselves. For example, if your child says no when you ask him to put a jacket on, that's OK. Getting cold won't hurt him. Your child is learning to make decisions and might often practise by saying 'no', even if he actually wants what you're offering.
- Coach your child through tricky social situations. Toddlers might find it hard to share and take turns because they're learning who they are and what's theirs. So you can say, 'It's my turn to have the red block now. Great sharing – well done!'

Toddlers learn about themselves by discovering what they look like – for example, mirrors provide hours of fun. They're also discovering what they can do, and 'I do it' is often a favourite expression. And they're working out where they belong, often by seeking out their loved ones for comfort and reassurance.

Slide 21 - Self Esteem Across the Ages (3)

Preschoolers and self-esteem

By around three years, most children realise that their bodies and minds belong to them. Most children can cope with some time away from their families by now, because they feel safe and loved. At this age, they often like to compare themselves with others, and will ask whether they're the biggest, fastest or best at whatever they're doing.

Balanced feedback is a good way to respond. For example, you can say:

- 'I think you're the best four-year-old painter I know!'

- ‘David is a faster runner than you, but you’re better at catching a ball.’ This lets children feel pride in themselves, but sends the message that other people are important and can do things well too.

Slide 22 - Self Esteem Across the Ages (4)

Primary school-age children and self-esteem

At school, children might compare themselves with their friends and classmates. This can put a dent in their self-esteem. They might feel less capable than others for the first time. New rules and learning new things can be a challenge for some children.

Here are some ways you can help:

- Give extra love and cuddles at the end of the school day.
- Focus on your child’s strengths and the effort she puts in. Praise your child for what she’s good at, and let her know you’re proud of her for trying things she finds difficult.
- Teach your child about fair play. He needs chances to win and lose.
- Coach your child through tricky social situations – for example, ‘Try giving a big smile when you want to join in. People will want to play with you if you look happy’. You could try role-playing these situations with your child first.
- Give your child the chance to try new activities and learn new things.
- Foster a good relationship between school and home by talking with the teacher to find out how your child is going. It’s also good to get involved in school life if you can, and show interest in your child’s schoolwork and homework.
- Watch out for the signs of learning problems, and bullying or other social difficulties that can affect your child’s self-esteem.

At primary school, self-esteem tends to relate to many things – including how well children learn, how they look, how they do at sport and how easily they make friends.

See also activity sheets

Slide 23 - Self Esteem Across the Ages (4)

Upper-Primary, Tweens & Teens

See the ‘I, Myself and Me’ Self-Esteem Workbook

Slide 24 - Looking after your own self-esteem

When it comes to your well-being, keep in mind that children learn a lot about self-esteem by watching their parents. Here are some tips for boosting your own self-esteem – and modelling good self-esteem for your children at the same time:

- Take pride in your achievements, and talk about the things you're good at. For example, 'I cooked a great risotto tonight'.
- Show your child how to handle failure in a healthy way. For example, if the risotto didn't turn out well, one response might be 'I am a hopeless cook'. But a healthier response is 'That's a shame – something went wrong this time. I'll try again next week'.
- Use positive self-talk, and avoid criticising yourself in front of your children. For example, 'Exercise isn't my favourite thing, but it's good for my body to go for a walk – so here I go!'.
- Look after yourself. Do some things that are fun. For example, learn something new, take a relaxing bubble bath, play sport, read a book, go for a walk or listen to music.
- Spend some time with friends who are positive and support you.
- Make regular time to be together with those close to you.
- If a health issue is affecting your self-esteem, it's a good idea to talk to your GP.

Slide 25 - Your Self-Esteem Checklist

Feel special.

It's important for you to help your children discover their own unique talents and qualities, and to value their own strengths. But also teach them that feeling special doesn't mean feeling better than others.

Set goals.

Teach your children to work towards a goal and to have pride in their accomplishments. Provide them with opportunities for success.

Try, try again.

Encourage your children to try things their own way, face challenges and take risks.

Handout – Body Image: Tips for Parents

Slide 26 - What to do when children struggle or fail

What if your child's self-esteem plummets when she gets cut from the gymnastics team or can't memorize multiplication tables?

1. Don't lose sleep over it

"So many parents have it backward," Taylor says. "They think struggles and failure will hurt their children's self-esteem, but it's actually a golden opportunity to help build it."

2. Make clear that your love is unconditional

Let your child know you love her even when she fails or makes bad decisions. If all you talk about is performance, Sopik points out, she will think you only love her for her report card or the lead she got in the play.

3. Make sure your child's goals are within reach, at a level appropriate for his ability

That may mean suggesting he join house league, where he can feel like a star rather than being the last one picked on the AA team. MacLeod learned this lesson when her son, Alex, was in grade two. Feeling like a failure at reading, Alex was ready to give up when MacLeod brought home some Magic Tree House books, which were slightly below Alex's level. "He read one every two days and was so proud of himself that he went on to read the Goosebumps series, no problem," she recalls. Afterward, mother and son talked about how Alex's choice to practise paid off, and she praised his perseverance.

4. Offer appropriate praise

Although praise is often misused, when it's specific and earned, it is a valuable self-esteem builder.

Lorna Crosse, a former music teacher, remembers asking her choir students to keep a "brag file" full of praise they earned. Any time they saw their names in a program or newspaper article or received a complimentary note, they were to put it inside. "When the children had a bad day, they would take out those words of praise and read all the neat things they had done, and it would make them feel better about themselves."

The brag file works because it shows children specific ways they're special and teaches them that practise reaps rewards.. And it's the practise—the effort—that should be the focus of praise, Sopik says. "Don't just say 'great play'. Tell him it was awesome how he passed the ball to his team-mate."

And keep in mind that a little indirect praise, such as stars on a chore chart, can work wonders. Mom Nancy Botelho gets even more inventive. She makes sure her children “overhear” a little boasting. “I’ll tell my friends how the teacher said Margaret is so kind, or how I saw Bridget working so hard at tying her shoes. The children just shine. Since they were spying, they know I mean it and I’m not just trying to make them feel good.”

Slide 27 - Confidence Building

See handout – “Helping Your Child Build Self Confidence”

Self-doubt and lack of confidence hold more children back than any other factor.

You can send children to the best school available but they won’t be happy and achieve unless they feel confident in their abilities.

Real confidence-building is the most important skill you can develop as a parent. Children with healthy self-esteem and self-confidence learn more, achieve more, have more friends and are generally happier than those with low levels of confidence.

But building a child’s confidence is complex. It is not just a matter of becoming a praise robot heaping positive comments on children at the first sign of them doing something well. For some children praise is meaningless.

Confident children take learning risks; they can separate themselves from failure or lack of success; and they aren’t dependent on the approval of their parents. I guess this last reason is why so many youngest children are risk-takers as they are not as concerned as eldest children about the approval of their parents.

But knowing this stuff is one thing. Getting inside children’s heads and shifting their thinking is another thing entirely.

Self-esteem and confidence-building is more than developing children’s capabilities as very competent children can be filled with self-doubts. You have to do more than teach them to be optimistic as a Pollyanna-ish feel-good view of the world won’t mean a child will take risks when they meet real challenges.

You need to tackle children’s lack of confidence on a number of different fronts – that is, what they think, how they feel and what they do.

Head, Heart, Hands approach

My Head, Heart and Hand approach shows parents how to tackle confidence-building on three different levels.

- foster positive mindsets in children and a real sense of optimism.
- help your child overcome their fears and anxieties, so they can take more risks socially and academically.
- develop a lasting sense of independence and self-sufficiency so they can really start achieving

Draw attention to handouts: 'Pointers for Parents', 'Children Learn by What They Live' poem & 'Fact Sheets for families'

Slide 28 – Housekeeping

Survey forms

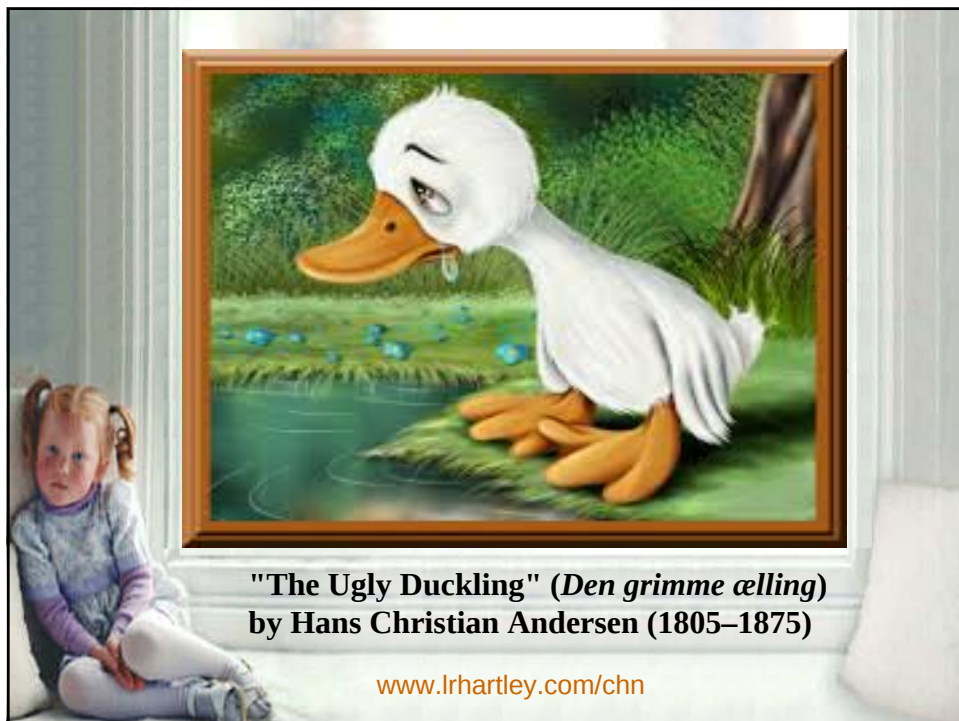
Certificate request

Newsletter request

Next program

Slide 29 – Question Time

Slide 31 – Thank you for Coming





Hi...
my name
is....

Icebreaker

- Please share your name, the ages of your children and what you hope to learn from today's seminar.

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**Celebrating
Fifty Years
of Seminars
2015**

Who is your seminar author?

Lionel Hartley, author, radio broadcaster, public speaker and retired sociologist. He was a Lifestyle Educator and Family-life Counsellor for three decades. He is a grandparent, married to Rosemary (40+ years) with three grown children.

We welcome your participation in today's seminar.
Time will be allowed at the end for your questions.

Lionel D C Hartley,
DipAdmin(NZIM), HonDip (DramArt), DipTheol (SDB), RGN (Psy, PsyPaed, Admin, Nutn), Dip Bus Law, Dip Econ, Dip Accy, BA (Lit), MA, PhD [etc.]

www.hartleyonline.blogspot.com

www.lrhartley.com/chn



What is self-esteem?

- A person's overall evaluation of his or her own worth
- What we think and feel about ourselves

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Activity 1

Modelling Self Esteem

- Please write down your own “three accomplishments that mean the most to you”.
- Be prepared to share at least one of these with the group.

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Children with self-esteem:

- **Feel liked and accepted**
- **Feel confident**
- **Feel proud of what they can do**
- **Think good things about themselves**
- **Believe in themselves**

Signs of a Healthy Self-Esteem

www.lrhartley.com/chn



Children with low self-esteem:

- **Are self-critical and hard on themselves**
- **Feel they're not as good as other children**
- **Think of the times they fail rather than when they succeed**
- **Lack confidence**
- **Doubt they can do things well**

Signs of an Unhealthy Self-Esteem

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Why Self-Esteem Matters

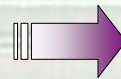
- They are more likely to try their best
- Helps children cope with mistakes
- Helps children try again
- Helps children do better at school, at home, and with friends

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How Self-Esteem Develops

This can happen when children:

- Make progress toward a goal
- Learn things at school
- Make friends and get along
- Learn skills — music, sports, art, cooking, technical skills
- Practice favourite activities
- Help, give, or be kind



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How Self-Esteem Develops

- Get praise for good behaviours
- Try hard at something
- Do things they're good at and enjoy
- Are included by others
- Feel understood and accepted
- Get a prize or a good grade they know they've earned

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Global Self-Esteem

- Includes talents, capabilities, accomplishments, and personality
- Includes academic self-esteem, social self-esteem, physical self-esteem, aesthetic self-esteem

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Self-Esteem Life Factors

Related to

- School success
- Feeling happy and satisfied
- Making healthy lifestyle choices
- Having rewarding relationships
- and Demonstrating effective coping skills

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Activity 2

Modelling Self Esteem

- In the box on your activity sheet, please draw a picture (or pictures) of some things that you like about yourself, or of something that you have created or have made of which you are proud.
- Be prepared to share this with the group.

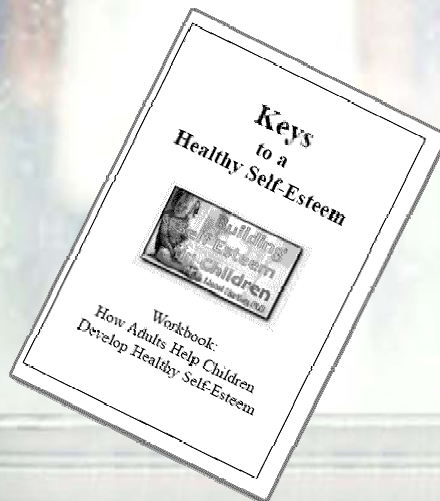
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Development of Healthy Self-Esteem

- Temperament
- Culture
- Acceptance
- Mentoring

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How Adults Help Children Develop Healthy Self-Esteem



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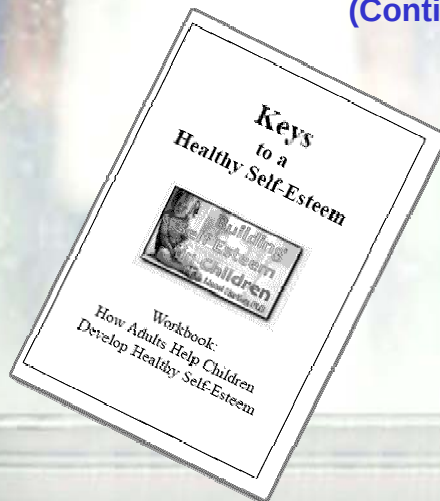
Activity 3

Modelling Self Esteem

- Please write down the names of at least three people who have been good role models in your life.
- Be prepared to share these with the group.

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How Adults Help Children Develop Healthy Self-Esteem (Continued)



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Self Esteem Across the Ages

Babies and self-esteem

- Caring for your baby gently
- Responding when your baby cries
- Giving lots of cuddles and smiles.

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Self Esteem Across the Ages

Toddlers and self-esteem

- Let your child explore her environment
- Let your toddler make reasonable decisions
- Give your child the chance to say 'no'
- Coach your child through tricky social situations.

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Self Esteem Across the Ages

Preschoolers and self-esteem

- Allow comparisons
- Balanced feedback
- Allow for pride in themselves

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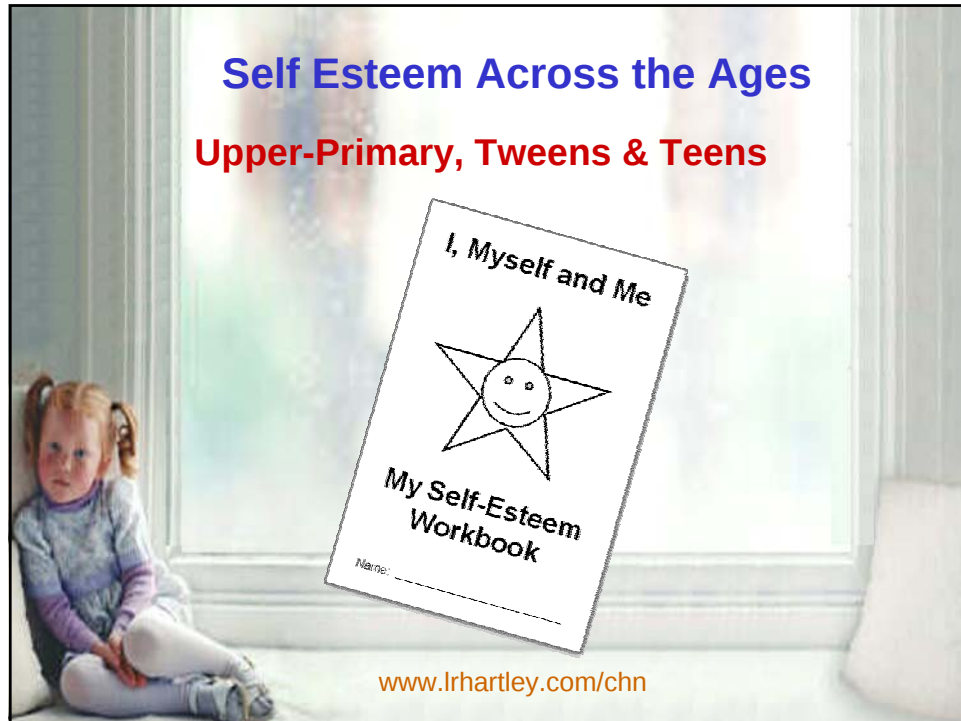
Self Esteem Across the Ages

Primary school-age children

- Extra love and cuddles
- Focus on strengths and effort
- Teach fair play
- Social situations coaching
- Chance to try new activities
- School and home relationship
- Watch for signs of problems

See Activity Sheet handouts

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Your Self-Esteem Checklist

- Feel special
- Set goals
- Try, try again
- Handout –
*“Body Image:
Tips for
Parents”*



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When children struggle or fail

- Don't lose sleep over it
- Make clear that your love is unconditional
- Make sure your child's goals are within reach, at a level appropriate for his ability
- Offer appropriate praise

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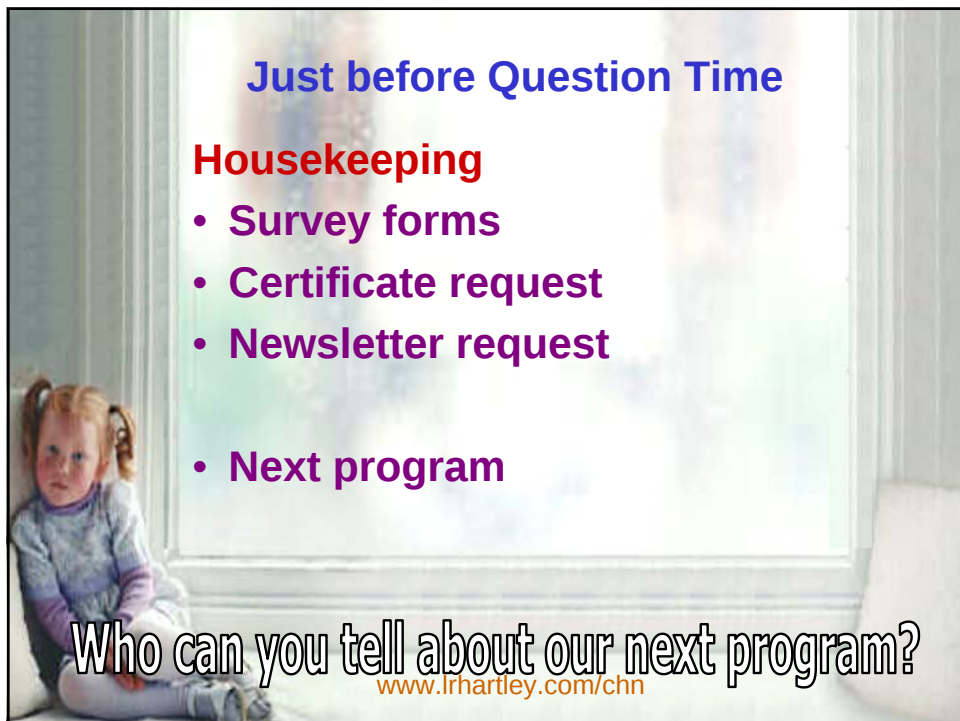
Confidence Building

Head, Heart, Hands approach

- **Head:** Positive mindset & optimism
- **Heart:** Overcoming fears and anxieties
- **Hands:** Independence & self-sufficiency

See handout – “Helping Your Child Build Self Confidence”

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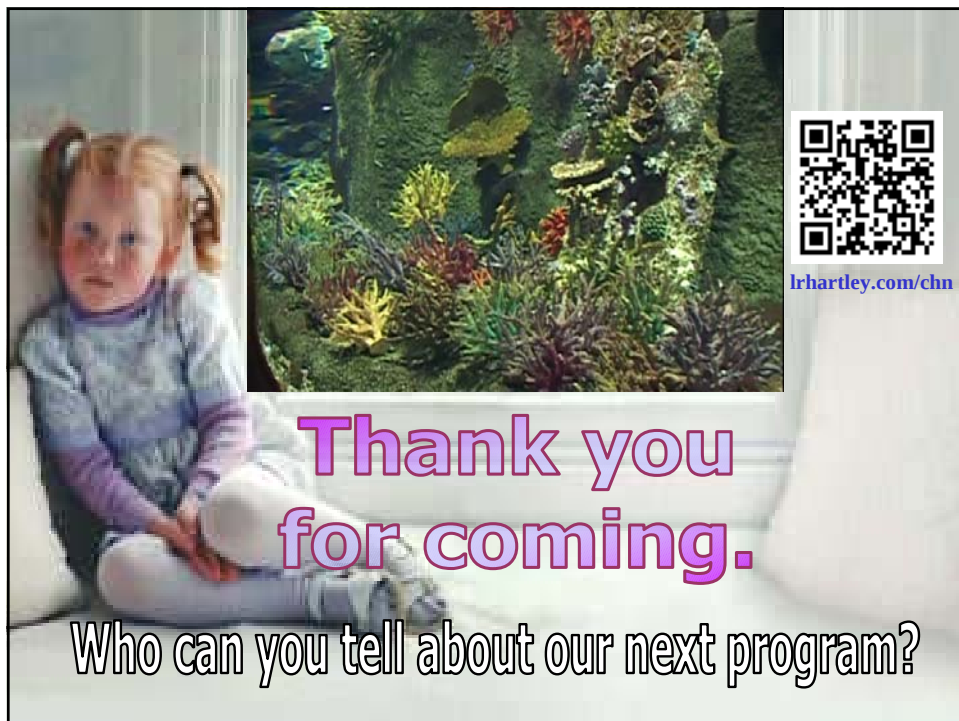
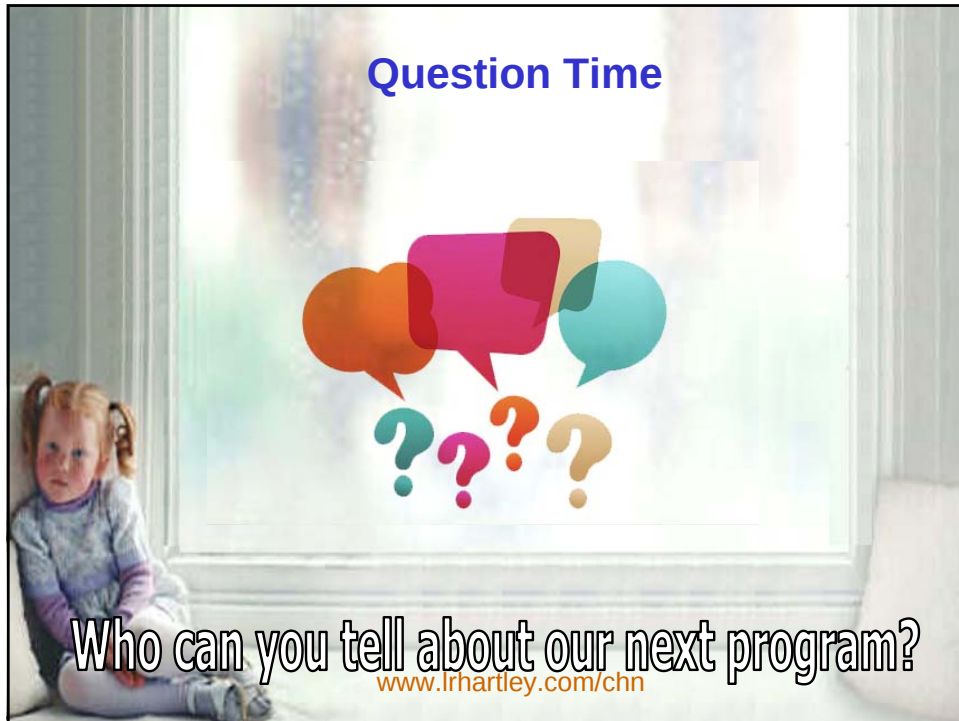
Just before Question Time

Housekeeping

- Survey forms
- Certificate request
- Newsletter request
- Next program

Who can you tell about our next program?

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Modelling Self Esteem



Building Self Esteem in Children

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Activity 1

Children learn a lot about self-esteem by watching their parents. So in this activity please write down your own “three accomplishments that mean the most to you”. Be prepared to share your answers.

Activity 2

In the box, please draw a picture (or pictures) of some things that you like about yourself, or of something that you have created or have made of which you are proud. Be prepared to share your artwork.

Activity 3

Write down the names of at least three people who have been good role models in your life. Be prepared to share your answers.

1. Love your child unconditionally

2. Distinguish being from behaving

3. Value children

4. Listen to children

5. Set appropriate boundaries and expectations

26. Provide opportunities for success

27. Support their pursuit of a passion

28. Provide opportunities for service

29. Coach relationship skills

30. Spend one-on-one time with your child

21. Instil independence and adventure

22. Encourage sports or other physical activities

23. Give constructive criticism

24. Teach resilience

25. Identify and redirect your children's inaccurate beliefs

6. Set household rules and be consistent

7. Let your child take healthy risks

8. Help your child set realistic goals

9. Teach children to develop decision-making skills

10. Teach problem-solving skills

11. Be a positive role model

12. Create a safe, loving home environment

13. Give your child some independence and control

14. Model self-love and positive self-talk

15. Don't compare your child with others

16. Show children that you can laugh at yourself

17. Praise effort

18. Help them feel special and appreciated

19. Encourage internal satisfaction

20. Avoid shaming words

Self-esteem

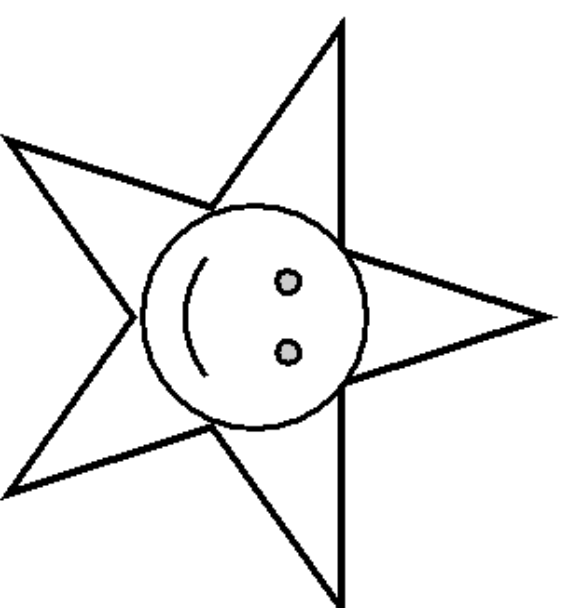
- The way you feel about yourself, or how you rate yourself is called self-esteem. Self-esteem is to do with accepting yourself, feeling confident, and liking yourself.
- Everyone's feelings about themselves can change from day to day, and are affected by many different situations and events.
- Nobody feels good about themselves all the time. Self-esteem is not fixed and it can and does change.
- People sometimes respond differently to the same event — how we feel about ourselves is partly affected by the expectations we have of ourselves.



Adapted from a resource
by Beyondblue.
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I, Myself and Me



My Self-Esteem Workbook

Name: _____

Part 1. Defining Me

The purpose of this exercise is to encourage you to start thinking about what makes you the unique person that you are.



Complete the following:

My favourite food

My favourite song/music

My favourite place

An important person in my life

My favourite possession

A group I belong to

My favourite pastime

A dream for the future

Something I dislike

Something I'm good at

Homework

Over the next week, use the Self Star Rating again to take regular ratings of your self-esteem. Pay attention to how your star ratings change. In particular, write down the things that help you to feel good over the next week.

	What helped me feel good:
Sunday Star Rating Star Rating _____	
Monday Star Rating Star Rating _____	
Tuesday Star Rating Star Rating _____	
Wednesday Star Rating Star Rating _____	
Thursday Star Rating Star Rating _____	
Friday Star Rating Star Rating _____	
Saturday Star Rating Star Rating _____	

Reflection

Rate your current self-esteem using the Self Star Rating.

Number of stars

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
									10

Do you think listing some personal strengths made you feel differently about yourself? If so, why might this be?

Of the five self-esteem contexts — *social, school, family, personal characteristics and interests/sports* — which are the most important to you and why?

Write down two or three things that you believe are most important for building self-esteem.

Part 2. 'I am....?'

Think about some other ways you could describe yourself. Complete a few 'I am' statements. Include skills or characteristics, likes/dislikes, and groups or teams you belong to.



Some examples are: 'I am a brother/sister'

'I am a good listener'

'I am against nuclear weapons'

'I am a member of the soccer team'

'I am a chocoholic'

Key message

It's OK to be who you are
— to be individual
— to not be good at everything. It makes you UNIQUE.

I am

I am

I am

I am

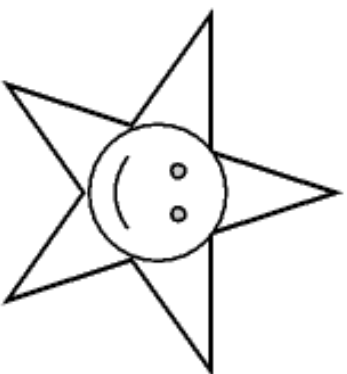
I am

I am

I am

I am

My Strengths

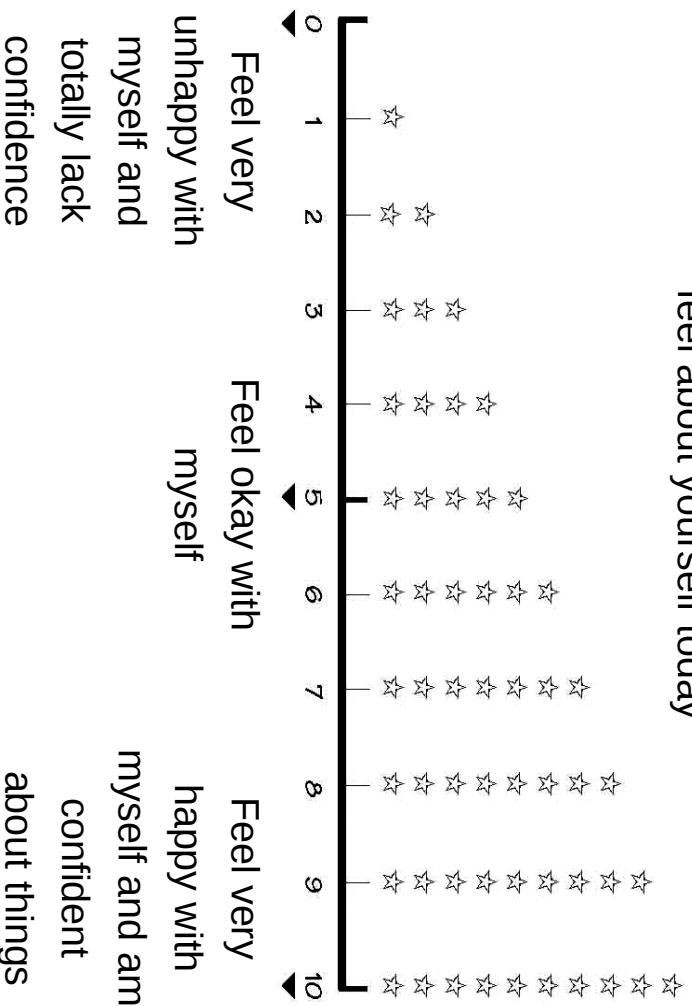


1. Circle any of the strengths that may be appropriate for you.

2. Then add some of your own strengths in each area.

I am a caring friend
I listen when others have a problem
I get along with others
I have friends I can rely on
I do fun things with others

- | play a sport
- | work well in a team
- | enjoy listening to music
- | have a hobby/interest
- | like to be creative



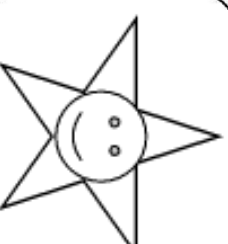
My Self Star Rating is _____

My Strengths

1. Circle any of the strengths that may be appropriate for you.

2. Then add some of your own strengths in each area.

Social	Interests/sports
I am a caring friend I listen when others have a problem I get along with others I have friends I can rely on I do fun things with others	I play a sport I work well in a team I enjoy listening to music I have a hobby/interest. I like to be creative
Family	School
I help around the house I try to get along with my family I help look after a pet	I try to do my best I have a subject I enjoy I contribute in class I enjoy learning new things I am involved in school activities
Personal characteristics	
I am not afraid to ask for help I try to think about others' feelings I try to finish things that I start	I listen to other people's opinions I have a sense of humour



Key message

Remind yourself, 'I am an OK person. I do have strengths'. It's true!

Children learn what they live.

If a child lives with criticism, He learns to condemn.

If a child lives with hostility, He learns to fight.

If a child lives with ridicule, He learns to be shy.

If a child lives with shame, He learns to feel guilty.

If a child lives with tolerance, He learns to be patient.

If a child lives with encouragement, He learns confidence.

If a child lives with praise, He learns to appreciate.

If a child lives with fairness, He learns justice.

If a child lives with security,

He learns to have faith.

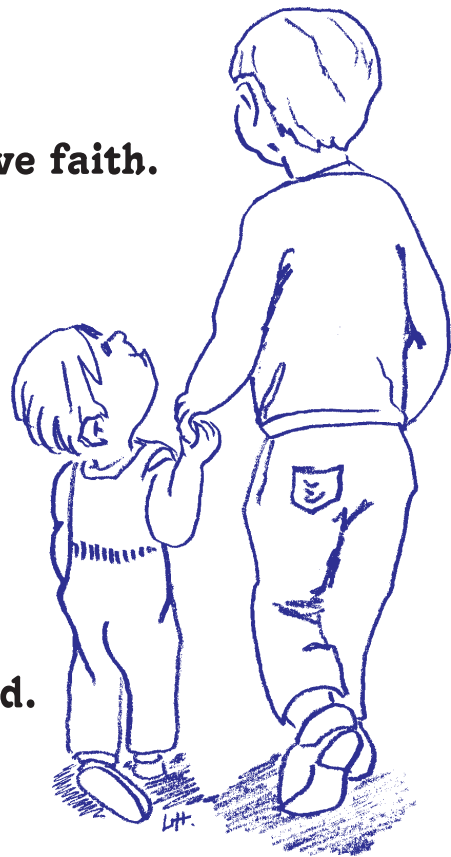
If a child lives with approval,

He learns to like himself.

If a child lives with acceptance

and friendship,

He learns to find love in the world.



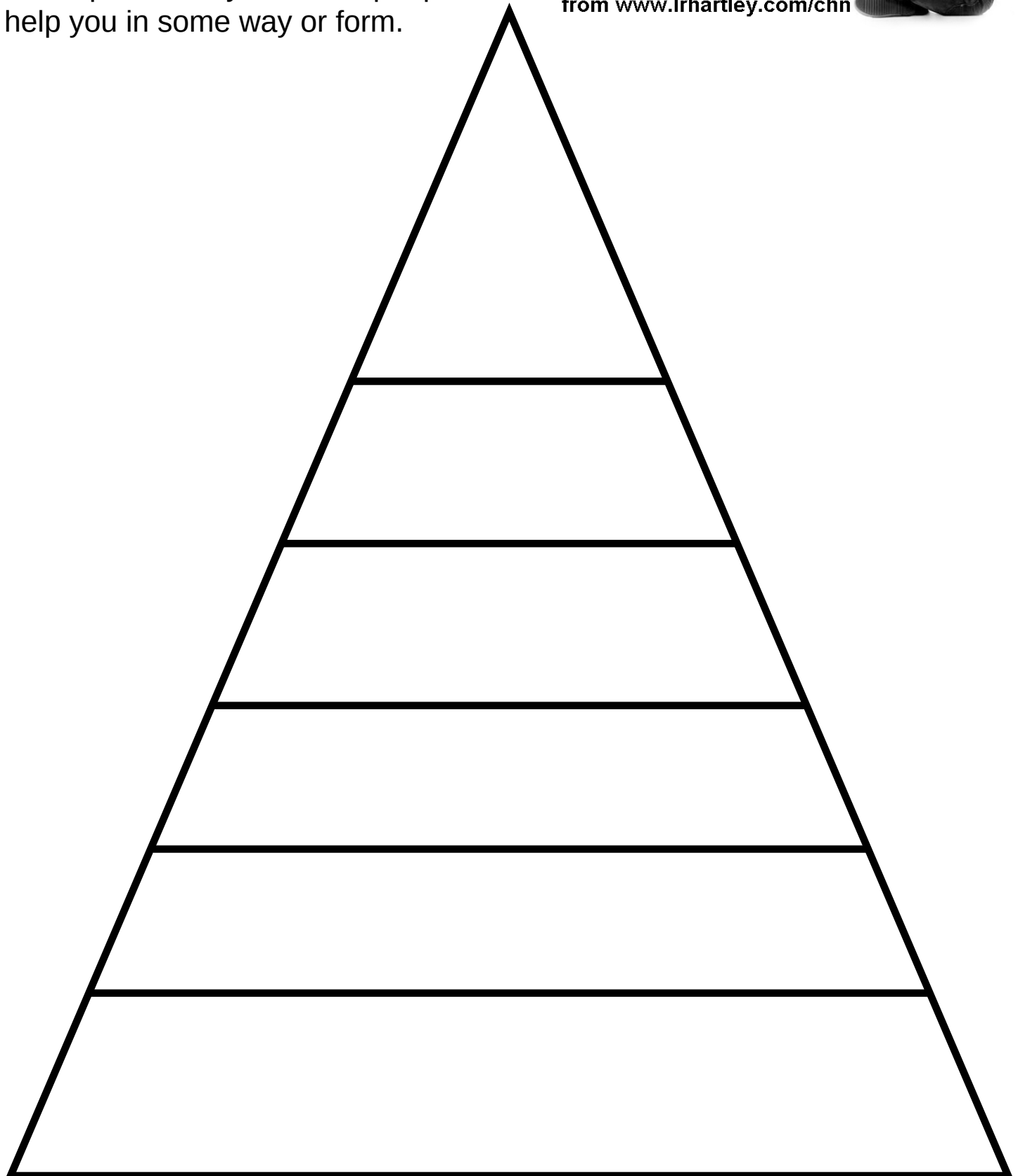
Pyramid of Friends

The bottom line should list your most important friend, other friends can be listed above in order of importance.

The top lines may be those people that help you in some way or form.



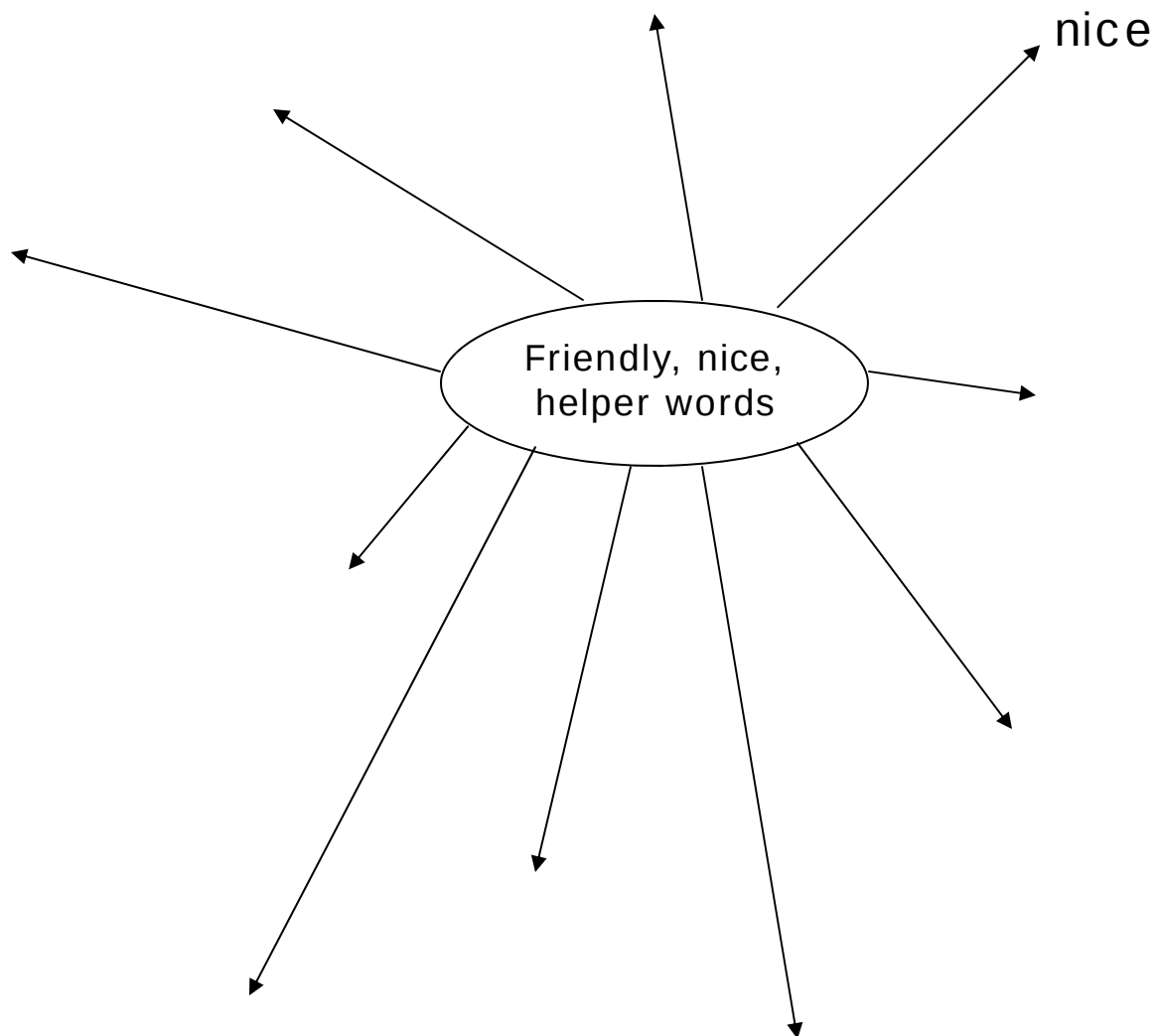
Available for free download
from www.lrhartley.com/chn





Name: _____

Friendly, Nice, Helper Words





Name: _____

Kinder and Friendlier

3 ways I could be more friendly are:

1.

2.

3.

3 ways I could be kinder are:

1.

2.

3.

What would you do?

1. If you saw somebody without a lunch?

2. If you saw somebody playing all by themselves at recess?

3. If somebody from your classroom was being picked on?



Name: _____

Trust Me

What does trust mean to you?

How can you get somebody to trust you?

Think of somebody you don't trust. Why don't you trust this person?

Would you tell somebody you don't trust a secret? _____ Why or why not?

How can you help somebody you don't trust to become more trustworthy?

Explain how trust helps to form better relationships.

To find out if you can trust somebody or not, what questions would you like to ask them first?

1.

2.

3.



Name: _____

My Qualities

I'm responsible when _____
but I could be better at _____

I show honesty by _____
but I really need to improve _____

I'm cooperative when _____ but
to improve, I could _____

I show respect by _____
but I need to remember to _____

I'm very helpful when _____ but
I could be more helpful by _____

I care about others, I show it by _____
_____ ,

I will continue to strive to _____

My very best trait is _____ because _____



Name: _____

Responsibility Poem

R is for _____

E is for _____

S is for _____

P is for _____

O is for _____

N is for _____

S is for _____

I is for _____

B is for _____

I is for _____

L is for _____

I is for _____

T is for _____

Y is for _____



Name: _____

Recipe for Making Friends

List the character traits (*friendly, good listener, cooperative etc.*) required to make friends. Beside each trait, explain what it looks like and why it's important.

Trait

Trait

Trait

Trait

Trait



Name: _____

Nice Words Word Search

e	e	o	w	i	l	l	i	n	g	h	n	y	o	a
r	p	s	t	n	y	t	s	e	n	o	h	h	u	r
r	e	s	p	o	n	s	i	b	i	l	i	t	y	t
h	c	y	t	i	r	g	e	t	n	i	f	a	g	e
e	l	o	c	t	c	i	a	r	e	o	r	p	o	c
o	i	e	u	a	r	i	o	o	t	e	i	m	l	e
l	s	h	r	r	c	u	y	s	s	n	e	e	o	r
n	e	e	o	e	t	c	s	p	i	o	n	p	p	e
p	h	l	r	p	e	e	e	t	l	d	d	r	a	a
l	p	p	t	o	t	c	s	p	w	t	s	c	p	t
e	p	f	n	o	t	i	m	y	t	o	r	n	n	c
a	e	u	y	c	l	p	m	e	g	a	r	u	o	c
s	u	l	c	o	m	p	l	i	m	e	n	t	s	u
e	e	n	m	a	n	n	e	r	s	e	i	c	h	t
s	k	n	a	h	t	a	g	e	a	m	l	s	e	y

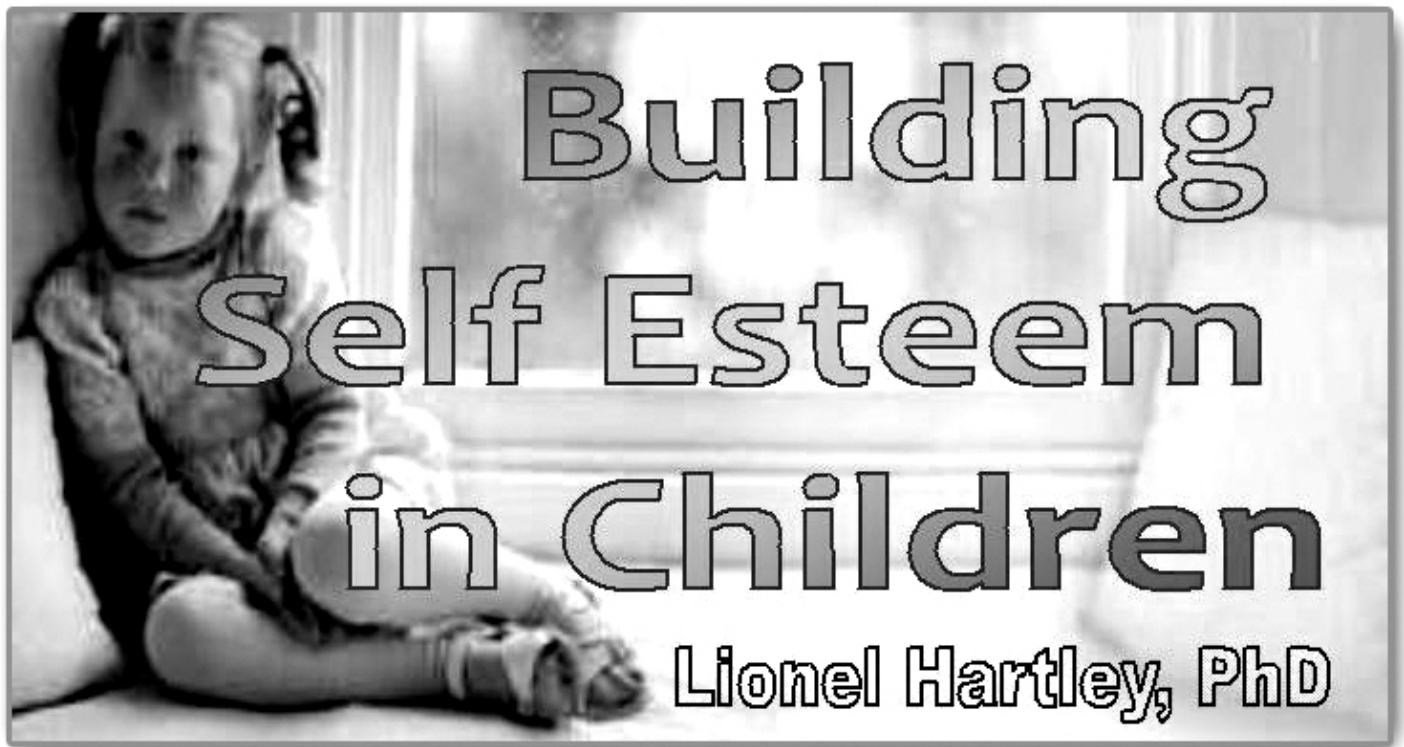
courtesy
respect
courage
manners
helpful

integrity
trust
friend
willing
apology

responsibility
optimism
empathy
trustworthy
compliment

please
care
thanks
acceptance
appreciation

cooperation
honesty
nice
listening



Program

Introductions

What is Self-Esteem?

Modelling Self Esteem Activity 1

Signs of a Healthy Self-Esteem

Why Self-Esteem Matters

How Self-Esteem Develops

Modelling Self Esteem Activity 2

Development Aspects of Healthy Self-Esteem

How Adults Help Children Develop Healthy Self-Esteem

Self Esteem Across the Ages:

 Babies and Self-Esteem

 Toddlers and Self-Esteem

 Preschoolers and Self-Esteem

 Primary School-Age Children and Self-Esteem

Looking After Your Own Self-Esteem

What to do When Children Struggle or Fail

Your Self-Esteem Checklist

Confidence Building

Head, Heart, Hands approach

Question & Answer Session



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Helping Your Child Build Self-Confidence

Self-confidence is an essential ingredient for all aspects of your child's healthy development and a key ingredient for school success. Confidence is a belief in your ability to master your body, behavior, and the challenges you encounter in the larger world. Children who are confident are eager to learn new skills and face new challenges. They also expect adults to be helpful and supportive of their efforts. Self-confidence is also crucial for getting along with others and working out the many social challenges—such as sharing, competition, and making friends—that children face in school settings. Self-confident children see that other people like them and expect relationships to be satisfying and fun.

How does self-confidence develop? Babies are born with no real sense of themselves as separate and distinct beings. They learn who they are primarily through their interactions and experiences with others. Primary caregivers—parents, relatives, caregivers, and teachers—reflect back to children their unique strengths and special attributes. In large part, a child's sense of confidence is shaped and nurtured (or not) by those who care for him. Watch how confidence grows across the first three years of life:

- A newborn cries and is comforted by her parent. This baby is learning that she is loved, important, and worthy of soothing.
- An 8-month-old shakes a rattle and smiles at the sound it makes. His caregiver says, "You figured out how the rattle works! Nice job!" This baby is learning he is a clever problem-solver.
- A toddler takes a stool to reach her favorite toy—dad's cell phone—on the countertop. "I can't let you play with my phone," says the girl's father, "But how about playing with this?" He hands her a toy phone and she happily begins making calls. This toddler is learning that her interests are important and will be respected and supported (within limits) by those who love her.
- A 3-year-old sobs as his parents leave for a night out on the town...without him. They help him calm down and get settled with his babysitter. This toddler is learning that his feelings are important and that his parents will listen and respond to him when he is distressed.

Below are ways you can nurture your child's self-confidence through your everyday interactions together.

Establish routines with your baby or child. When events are predictable, when they happen in approximately the same way at approximately the same time each day, your child will feel safe, secure, confident and in control of his world. He knows that, for example, bath comes first, then books, then songs and then bedtime. He understands the what will happen next and can prepare himself for those changes. If day-to-day events seem to occur randomly, it can cause children a lot of anxiety. If life doesn't make sense, it may feel too scary to fully explore. When children know what to expect, they are free to play, grow, and learn.

Allow for and facilitate plenty of opportunity for play. Play is how children learn about themselves, other people, and world around them. Through play, children also learn how to solve problems and develop confidence —finding the ball behind the couch, getting the right shape into its hole, getting the jack-in-the-box to pop up. An infant who successfully presses a button on a toy that produces a pleasant sound is learning that he can make something happen.

It is also through play that children learn how it feels to be someone else, to try on new roles and to work out complicated feelings. A two-year old who dresses up, playing a mommy going off to work, may be working out her feelings about separations. A three-year old playing Power Rangers may be practicing being more assertive, mastering fears or venting aggressive feelings. Let your child lead playtime—this will build his confidence, assertiveness, and leadership skills.

Help your child learn to be a problem-solver. Help your child work through problems, but don't always solve them for her. Move the blocks on the bottom of the tower so they are a little more stable, but don't put the tall one on top—let her figure out how to make it balance. This way you give her the chance to feel successful.

If your child is building a block house on the rug and it keeps falling, you could:

- Tell her that you see how frustrated she is
- Ask her if she knows what may be causing the problem
- Offer your observations, i.e., that the rug is soft so the blocks aren't stable
- Ask if she has any ideas about what might make them steadier
- Ask if she wants suggestions: "How about making it on the hard floor?"

The goal is to guide and support your child in her problem-solving efforts but not do for her what she has the skills to accomplish herself. Sometimes, your child's times of greatest frustration are in fact golden opportunities for her to develop feelings of confidence, competence and mastery. She'll learn that she can depend on you to encourage her. Meanwhile, she's the one who finds the solution.

Give your child responsibilities. Feeling useful and needed makes children feel important and builds confidence. Jobs should be age-appropriate. Very young children can sort laundry with you, help feed pets, water plants, and pick up toys. Be specific about what is expected. Say, "Please put a napkin on each plate," not "Help me set the table."

Celebrate your child's successes. Showing your child that you recognize how he is growing and learning helps to build his confidence. Make a photo album of his accomplishments. Take pictures of your child struggling to climb onto a chair, and one of your child sitting in it proudly.

Encourage your child to try to master tasks he is struggling with. Children learn by doing. Break down difficult tasks into manageable steps to help him feel in control, confident, and safe. For example, if he is learning to put his shoes on:

- Unlace his shoes and open them for him
- Line them up so he can step in
- Let him lean on you while he steps in
- Guide his hand, if necessary, as he fastens the shoes
- Tell him: "Nice job getting your shoes on!"

As you work on a task or skill that is tough for your child—like making the transition to training wheels or learning to go down the big slide—let him know you believe in him, but also communicate that you will not be disappointed if he isn't yet ready. You are there to support him whenever he is ready to try again. When children feel in control, they feel strong in the world.

Provide language for your child's experience that accurately reflects his experience, shows understanding and empathy, and instills confidence. "You tried to pour your own juice. Good for you. Some juice is in the cup. Some spilled. You look sad about that. Here, wipe it up with this sponge. That pitcher is heavy for little hands. I'll give you a smaller one and you can try again."

Be a role model yourself. Children are always keenly watching their parents for clues about what to do or how to feel about different tasks or social interactions. When it comes to learning how to manage emotions like hurt, anger, or frustration, you are their "go-to" person. If you can model persistence and confidence in yourself, your child will learn this too. Try new things and praise yourself aloud. "I was really frustrated putting up that shelf. It was hard to do. When it fell, I was mad. I rested and tried again. Now I'm proud of myself for getting the job done and not giving up."

If you can say to your child when you are angry, "I don't like that you threw that ball at me. I know you are angry and that's o.k. But throwing hurts. You can tell me why you are mad and hit this pillow if you have to do something with your body." You are not only addressing your child's behavior, and offering alternatives, but the way you are dealing with your anger gives your child a healthy model for coping with strong feelings.

Helping Young Children Develop Self-Esteem

Self-esteem or feelings of self-worth are linked to success in life, and play an important role in the development of children's social, physical and academic abilities. Research shows that low self-esteem is associated with increased risk for loneliness, resentment, irritability, anxiety, depression, and eating disorders.

As a parent, you, more than anyone else, can play an important role in promoting your children's self-esteem and helping them feel better about themselves.

What is self-esteem?

Self-esteem is a term used in psychology to reflect a person's overall evaluation of his or her own worth. If you have good self-esteem, it means that you like yourself and believe that you are as good as everyone else. If you have poor self-esteem, it means that you believe that you are inferior to others.

Self-esteem encompasses the beliefs and feelings that children have about their competence and worth, including their ability to make a difference in their environment, confront challenges and learn from both their success and failure.

Signs of a healthy self-esteem

Children with good self-esteem have a sense of security, assume responsibility, act independently, take personal pride in accomplishments, tolerate frustration, accept mistakes and failure, have a sense of self-discipline and self-control, handle peer pressure appropriately, attempt new tasks and challenges, handle positive and negative feelings, and offer assistance to others.

How parents can help

The development of a healthy or positive self-esteem is very important to the happiness and success of children. Parental attitudes and behavior heavily affect the devel-

opment of self-esteem in young children. The following tips are helpful for developing healthy self-esteem in your children:

- Praise your children and remember to commend them for their efforts and jobs well done. Help them feel special and appreciated.
- Identify and redirect your children's inaccurate beliefs. Teach them how to think in positive ways, and change their negative thoughts about themselves to positive ones.
- Give constructive criticism, and avoid criticism that takes the form of ridicule or shame. Provide feedback about the child's actions, not the child as a person.
- Teach children to develop problem-solving and decision making skills. Recognize them when they have made good decisions.
- Be a positive role model. Take care of your own self-esteem, and your children will have a great role model.
- Create a safe, loving home environment. Children who do not feel safe or are abused at home will suffer immensely from low self-esteem.
- Show children that you can laugh at yourself. Show them that life doesn't need to be serious all the time. Laughing, good humor and smiling not only lighten the mood but also relieve stress, increase energy and take away thoughts of anger, anxiety or distress.

While it is normal to have ups and downs in life, and children's sense of self-esteem can vary from one situation to the next, constant poor or low self-esteem can be a symptom of a mental health disorder or emotional disturbance requiring medical attention.

Resources

Building Self-esteem a Self-Help Guide online at http://download.ncadi.samhsa.gov/ken/pdf/SMA-3715/SMA-3715_Building_Self_11p.pdf

The Caring for Every Child's Mental Health Campaign: Part of the Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services

Program for Children and Their Families of the Federal Center for Mental Health Services. Parents and caregivers who wish to learn more about mental well-being in children may call (800) 789-2647 or visit mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/child/.

by A. Rahman Zamani, MD, MPH



Provided by California Childcare Health Program
For more information, please contact:
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Help Your Child Develop a Positive Self-Concept

It is apparent that success in life is determined more by how a person feels about themselves than by talent or ability. Research reveals that successful students are aware of their worth and importance. These same students are the ones who are able to resist peer pressure and are less likely to become involved in socially unacceptable behaviors. A positive self-concept is mentioned frequently as one of the most important weapons against substance abuse.

All in all, the best approach to developing a positive self-concept for a student is a concentrated effort between parents and teachers. There are many things one can do to enhance a student's self-esteem. Some suggestions for parents are listed below.

EXPECTATIONS

- State rules clearly and enforce them. Define limits, but allow flexibility for children within these limits.
- Expectations for children should be reasonable and fit ability and age. Guide them in setting reasonable goals so they can achieve success.
- Children feel useful and valued if they have responsibilities.
- Children appreciate being kept informed of family matters and being made aware of family values. Children benefit from hearing descriptions of the experiences that have determined a family's values. The decisions made to accept certain beliefs and the reasons behind feelings are important lessons for children.

ACTIONS

- Discuss your children's activities and let them know that what they do is important to you. Attend games, parent day at school, drama presentations, award ceremonies, etc.
- Teach children to spend time/money wisely.
- It is extremely important to spend quality time together. Shared activities become favorite activities.
- Demonstrate how much you care. Hug them. Tell them and show them you love them and that they are terrific.

INTERACTIONS

- Give praise and recognition frequently. Reward children for a job well done. Emphasize the good things they do.
- Let children know that you have made mistakes, learned from them, and despite it all, you feel good about yourself. Be a good role model.
- Allow children to do as much as they can on their own, but give them encouragement and support when they need it.
- Look for solutions to problems without placing blame or commenting on a child's character. Let children know if there is a problem and encourage them to help figure out the best solution.
- Treat children as you would a good friend or as you like to be treated yourself. In communicating with your children, frequently use phrases that build self-esteem such as "Thank you. What a good idea! You did that well."

ATTITUDES

- Deal with emotions, ideas, and feelings seriously. Never belittle your children by making statements such as "You'll grow out of it." or "It's not as bad as you think."
- Emphasize the uniqueness and strengths of others. Help your children develop an appreciation for different backgrounds, cultures, and philosophies.

Enhance Your Child's Self-Concept

- Teach children how to say good things to themselves. Positive self-talk is a great self-esteem builder.
- Encourage your child to be responsible for a younger child. Younger children can profit from caring for pets.
- Self-esteem increases when one is involved in activities rather than being a spectator. Playing music, for example, builds self-concept more than just listening to music.
- Praise your children when you see them stop a bad behavior on their own. Self-esteem correlates with the ability to control one's behavior.
- Research reveals that physical activities (such as running or other forms of exercise) build self-esteem and can be used to counteract depression.
- Share with your children your own personal adversities. Give them specific examples of how you have failed and learned from your failures. Let them know it is permissible for them to fail and learn from their failures as well.
- Insist that children complete tasks. Finishing a job makes one feel good about oneself.
- The more you compliment a child, the more he/she learns to appreciate others.
- Practice and preach positive thinking and express positive thoughts to your child.
- Children become what you tell them they are!
- Create opportunities for children to help others, such as neighbors, smaller children, and grandparents.
- Belonging to clubs, groups and other organizations enhances self-esteem.
- Build confidence by believing in your child. Encourage them to accept challenges.
- A good trait to promote is patience. Growing flowers or vegetables, waiting in line patiently, and sitting quietly teaches patience.
- Correct and discipline children in private.
- Prepare children for new experiences and difficult situations. Everyone feels more confident when they know what is going to happen.
- Children with positive self-concepts work to correct problems rather than spend time worrying about them.
- Let children choose their own activities, but interfere if they are doing something immoral or dangerous.
- Ask your child's opinion. Anyone's self-esteem is enhanced by this practice.
- Making others laugh is good for one's self-concept. But teach children the difference between positive and negative humor. Humor should never hurt.
- A wink can be a secret hug.

Provided for you by the:



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There are many ways that parents can foster positive body image and strong self-esteem in their children. If you are at all concerned about your child's body image, self-esteem or eating behaviours, consult with your doctor or dietitian for information and referral.

Your body image is how you think and feel about your body, and what you imagine that it looks like.

This may have nothing to do with your actual appearance. Poor body image can have a range of negative effects, including disordered eating, depression, anxiety and low self-esteem.

Relationships and activity choices can be seriously affected by low self-esteem. Feeling embarrassed about physical appearance can cause some people to stop exercising, because they don't want other people to see their bodies. A sedentary lifestyle leads to a host of health problems including an increased risk of obesity.

Be a good role model

The most influential role model in your child's life is you. Parents can encourage their children to feel good about themselves by showing them how it's done. For example:

- Children learn eating behaviours from their parents, so make sure you include plenty of fresh fruits, vegetables, protein foods, low-fat dairy products and unprocessed cereals in the family's diet. Go easy on takeaway, fried foods and sugary snacks.
- Don't crash diet. Don't encourage your child to crash diet either. Studies show that many young people mistakenly think that crash dieting is a harmless and effective way to lose weight. Talk to your child about the dangers of crash dieting.
- Accept your own body size and shape. Don't complain about 'ugly' body parts or, at least, don't share your opinions with your child.
- Accept other people's body sizes and shapes. Don't put a lot of emphasis on physical appearances or your child will too. Instead, try to talk to your child about all the different aspects that make up a person, such as personality, skills and outlook on life.
- Exercise regularly. Have at least one family activity per week that involves some kind of exercise; for example, bushwalking, gardening, playing backyard cricket, going for a walk or swimming.
- Be critical of media messages and images that promote thinness. Encourage your child to question and challenge Western society's narrow 'beauty ideal'.

Get them into the activity habit

Studies show that a person who appreciates what their body can do, rather than what it looks like, feels good about their body and tends to have higher self-esteem.

Suggestions include:

- Make your family an active one. Exercise yourself and encourage your child from an early age to exercise right along with you. For example, take little ones for strolls in the pram. Once they're old enough, encourage them to walk part of the way.
- Emphasise fitness, health and enjoyment as the motivations for exercise, rather than weight loss or weight management. Talk about "activity" rather than "exercise".
- Try to find a team sport they enjoy. Team sports encourage camaraderie, teamwork, mild competition and mastery of physical skills. A child who feels passionate about their sport is more likely to continue playing into adulthood.
- Regular exercise helps to maintain a healthy body weight.

- Be cautious of sports that are strongly competitive or have a strong emphasis on thinness – for example, gymnastics and ballet.
- Vulnerable children may feel pressured to lose weight to participate in these activities.

Help them feel confident about themselves

A strong sense of identity and self-worth are crucial to your child's self-esteem.

Suggestions include:

- Encourage problem solving, expression of opinions and individuality.
- Teach your child various healthy coping strategies to help them deal with life's challenges.
- Allow them to say 'no'. Encourage them to be assertive if they feel they have been mistreated. (See www.lrhartley.com/seminars/assert.htm for the difference between aggression and assertiveness.)
- Listen to their concerns about body shape and appearance. Puberty, in particular, can be a worrying time. Reassure your child that their physical changes are normal and that everyone develops at different times and rates.
- Don't tease them about their weight, body shape or looks. Even seemingly friendly nicknames can be hurtful if they focus on some aspect of the child's appearance.
- Place value on their achievements, such as talents, skills and personality characteristics.
- Make your child feel they have an important role in the family; for example, give them age-appropriate household tasks. Tell them what a valuable contribution they make to the running of the house.

Talk to your school

Your child's school can be a positive environment that fosters healthy body image and self-esteem. Talk to your principal about any concerns you may have.

Issues may include:

- Teasing about physical appearance is a known risk factor for poor body image. Make sure your school has an effective anti-bullying policy. If your child is being teased, contact the principal immediately.
- Peer pressure can contribute to poor body image if the peer group is concerned with physical appearance and thinness. Talk to the school about their body-image programs.
- If you think your child is hanging out with a 'thin-is-in' crowd, try to arrange opportunities for them to mix with other children. Once again, team sports could be a valuable avenue, since the emphasis is on how the person plays, not what they look like.
- Self-conscious students may shy away from school sports because of the uniforms. If necessary, consult with your school on possible changes to make the sports uniforms less revealing or figure-hugging.

Where to get help

- Your doctor • Your child's school principal • Your local Community Health Centre
- Dietitians Association of Australia • Psychologist • Other Health Care Professional

Things to remember

- You are the most influential role-model in your child's life, so lead by example.
- Give your child opportunities to appreciate their body for what it can do, rather than what it looks like.
- If you are at all concerned about your child's body image, self-esteem or eating behaviours, consult with your doctor or dietitian for information and referral.



Life Skills School

with Dr Lionel Hartley

Non scholæ sed vitæ discimus

(We do not learn for school, but for life)

— Seneca



Having a healthy sense of self-esteem is one of the most important things that a parent, teacher or coach can give to a child.

In this program we learn how to build self-esteem in our children so they can lead a happy fulfilled life.

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